

VZCZCXRO3082
RR RUEHAST
DE RUEHVI #1556/01 1511317
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 311317Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3664
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0128

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 VIENNA 001556

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STATE FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM UNMIK SR VI AU
SUBJECT: KOSOVO STATUS NEGOTIATIONS: MAY 22 UPDATE
REF: USNATO 000328

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THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

¶11. (U) THIS CABLE IS AN UPDATE FROM THE U.S. LIAISON OFFICER IN THE OFFICE OF THE UN SPECIAL ENVOY FOR KOSOVO STATUS (UNOSEK).

SUMMARY

¶12. (SBU) UN SPECIAL ENVOY FOR KOSOVO STATUS MARTTI AHTISAARI MET WITH SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER KOSTUNICA ON MAY 22; THE MEETING WAS CHARACTERIZED BY A FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON BOTH SIDES. UNOSEK IS PREPARING A NEW PAPER ON DECENTRALIZATION TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FEEDBACK FROM BELGRADE AND PRISTINA. A UNOSEK-LED "EXPERT TEAM" IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT KOSOVO THE WEEK OF JUNE 5 TO ASSESS POTENTIAL PROTECTION ZONES AROUND RELIGIOUS SITES. THE NEGOTIATION SESSION ON ECONOMIC ISSUES WILL TAKE PLACE ON MAY 31. END SUMMARY.

AHTISAARI IN BELGRADE

¶13. (SBU) AHTISAARI REPORTED HIS MAY 22 MEETING WITH PM KOSTUNICA WENT "AS EXPECTED," AND WAS "QUITE FRANK" ON BOTH SIDES. KOSTUNICA EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS WITH AHTISAARI'S STRATEGY AND SAID THAT THE TALKS ARE NOT BRINGING ANY RESULTS. KOSTUNICA CRITICIZED STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION AND POINTED TO IT AS A MAJOR REASON WHY THE FORMAT AND STRUCTURE OF THE TALKS SHOULD BE REVISED. KOSTUNICA MAINTAINED HIS LEGALISTIC ARGUMENTATION ON KOSOVO AND TOLD AHTISAARI HE DID NOT TAKE THE PRIVATE MESSAGES AS REFLECTING A "CONSENSUAL MESSAGE" FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. HE EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO ARRIVE AT A "COMPROMISE, NEGOTIATED" SETTLEMENT, AND ASKED THAT AHTISAARI AND ROHAN SHOW "EQUAL TREATMENT OF BOTH SIDES." KOSTUNICA ALSO SAID BELGRADE WOULD PROVIDE UNOSEK WITH ITS "MORE THAN AUTONOMY/LESS THAN INDEPENDENCE" PROPOSAL FOR KOSOVO STATUS WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK.

¶14. (SBU) AHTISAARI WAS AS FRANK IN REPLY. HE SAID THAT IT IS NOT HIS OPINION ON FINAL STATUS THAT MATTERS, BUT RATHER THE OPINION OF THE KEY MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. HE TOLD KOSTUNICA THAT BELGRADE NEEDS TO LISTEN MORE CAREFULLY, AS "SIGNALS HAVE BEEN CLEAR." HE URGED KOSTUNICA TO GRASP THIS AND MAKE THE BEST OF THE SITUATION BY WORKING WITH US TO CREATE

CONDITIONS FOR SECURITY FOR ALL OF KOSOVO'S MINORITY COMMUNITIES, PARTICULARLY SERBS. HE ALSO MADE CLEAR HIS INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH MEETINGS AS SCHEDULED; KOSTUNICA DID NOT SUGGEST THAT BELGRADE REPRESENTATIVES WOULD FAIL TO ATTEND.

RESPONDING TO SERBIAN LETTER

15. (SBU) AHTISAARI REMAINS CALM BUT DETERMINED IN RESPONSE TO BELGRADE'S LETTER CRITICIZING THE PROCESS TO DATE AND CALLING FOR AN IMMEDIATE MOVE TO A DISCUSSION OF STATUS. DEPUTY SPECIAL ENVOY ALBERT ROHAN MET WITH THE CONTACT GROUP ON MAY 26 TO DISCUSS HOW BEST TO RESPOND; UNOSEK HAS PROVIDED THE CONTACT GROUP WITH RECOMMEND ELEMENTS FOR A REPLY.

FUNCTIONAL UPDATES

--DECENTRALIZATION: ON THE MARGINS OF THE MAY 23 MEETING ON THE CHURCH/CULTURAL HERITAGE, UNOSEK MET WITH THE PRISTINA DELEGATION AND REVIEWED THE UNOSEK PAPER ON DECENTRALIZATION. PRISTINA REMOVED SOME OF ITS BRACKETS AND IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF BELGRADE-PROPOSED CHANGES IT COULD ACCEPT. ON THAT BASIS AND ON THE BASIS OF THE PREVIOUS WEEK'S DISCUSSION WITH BELGRADE ON DECENTRALIZATION, UNOSEK IS PREPARING A NEW PAPER ON DECENTRALIZATION THAT WILL SEEK TO NARROW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. BERNHARD SCHLAGHECK WILL VISIT PRISTINA AND BELGRADE SHORTLY TO CONSULT ON THE PAPER.

--PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS SITES/CULTURAL HERITAGE: THE MAY 23 SESSION ON PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE WAS REPORTED SEPTEL. THE UNOSEK-LED "EXPERT TEAM" TO REVIEW POTENTIAL PROTECTION ZONES HAS NOW BEEN SCHEDULED TO VISIT KOSOVO THE WEEK OF JUNE 5.

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--MINORITY RIGHTS, RETURNS, MISSING PERSONS, STANDARDS: IN HIS MEETING WITH KOSTUNICA, AHTISAARI AGAIN RAISED THE QUESTION OF A MEETING ON COMMUNITY PROTECTION ISSUES. KOSTUNICA WAS FIRM IT COULD ONLY HAPPEN AFTER A STATUS DISCUSSION. UNOSEK WILL CALL A MEETING ON COMMUNITY PROTECTIONS BEFORE MOVING TO PHASE II--A DISCUSSION OF STATUS. HOWEVER, UNOSEK BELIEVES THE POTENTIAL EXISTS TO MAKE MORE PROGRESS ON DECENTRALIZATION, CHURCH PROTECTIONS, AND ECONOMIC ISSUES; CALLING A MEETING ON COMMUNITY PROTECTIONS OVER BELGRADE'S OBJECTIONS WILL LIKELY MARK THE END OF "PHASE 1" DISCUSSION OF STATUS-NEUTRAL ISSUES, SO UNOSEK PLANS TO CALL THAT MEETING ONLY AFTER HAVING EXHAUSTED THE POTENTIAL FOR PROGRESS IN THE OTHER ISSUES. MEANWHILE, THE EUROPEAN CENTER FOR MINORITY ISSUES, THE INSTITUTION HELPING PRISTINA DEVELOP ITS PROPOSALS ON COMMUNITY PROTECTIONS, HAS SENT OUT INVITATIONS TO UNOSEK, UNMIK, THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, THE EU, AND THE OSCE, FOR ITS JUNE 19 SEMINAR WITH PISG OFFICIALS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK/REFINEMENT OF THE PRISTINA PROPOSAL.

--ECONOMY, PROPERTY ISSUES, EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES: UNOSEK HAS SENT OUT TO THE INTERNATIONAL ACTORS ITS REVISED NON-PAPER ON ECONOMIC ISSUES (E-MAILED TO EUR/SCE). UNOSEK ALSO SENT OUT THIS WEEK TO ALL PARTICIPANTS THE INVITATION AND THE FORMAL AGENDA FOR THE MAY 31 MEETING ON ECONOMIC ISSUES (E-MAILED TO EUR/SCE).

--AHTISAARI TRAVELS: AHTISAARI WAS IN FINLAND LAST WEEK ON PERSONAL BUSINESS. HE TRAVELED TO MOSCOW ON MAY 29-30 AND WILL TRAVEL TO CHINA JUNE 3-7.

MCCAW